

Translation: @shinocchidesu

## **D R A M A T i c a l M u r d e r r e : c o d e - M o r p h i n e R o u t e ; P a r t 6 T r a n s l a t i o n**

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### **SUMMARY**

Aoba being back in a game that was what had made up his past.

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...After that, a week passed.

Being part of Morphine, I visit the Old Resident District for recruitment of new members every so often, then sleep all day long in the empty room, and sometimes, I walk around Platinum Jail, with nowhere in mind.

I often get into fights with the researchers in the tower, thanks to the fact that I could walk around as I like, something that's unacceptable in their eyes.

Frequently, I'm also reprimanded for letting Scrap slip during "Spirited Away".

Within this week, it seems like I've become some important person in the tower.

But, everyone whom had looked at me wears this surprise expression on their faces. Nothing else.

Especially for the researchers; they'd look at me fixedly then hurriedly walk away.

I guess it must be some kind of order Toue has instructed upon. Above all, everyone's eyes are not normal when they look at me.

Fear and disgust and dislike... and most like, jealousy.

I don't follow rules, even when I cause a scene I'm not punished; my existence is like smoke.

Oh well, I don't care what others think about me. That aside, I would prefer this body to synchronize itself properly soon.

The long sleeping hours are finally shortened. With time, I guess my sleeping hours will also return to normal.

Anyway, it's not like I want to live a normal lifestyle again, if I'm sleepy, then I'll sleep.

Even so, I wonder if it's because of my unpleasant relationship with "Reason", I've been seeing the same dream since the day before yesterday.

In the dream, there's Granny and Ren, everyone is happily mixing around with each other.

In that dream, I also hear that strange voice again.

The same voice that I heard in my head when I looked into Sei's eyes...

- Aoba -

- ...me -

They are words I don't know the meanings of.  
Why do those things appear in my dream...  
It's seriously disgusting me. It's all thanks to "Reason"'s immaturity.  
I have to weaken "Reason" more.  
For example, I need to shatter him into pieces, or cut him into slices; I need to give him that kind of impact.  
If I do that, this frustration I'm feeling now would also come to an end.

Aoba

...

I was supposed to go for "Spirited Away" today. I don't have anything else to do besides that.

I'll need to follow Mizuki and the other Morphine members to the Old Resident District just to look around.

They asked me to go together but I rejected it. In the end, I end up rolling around my bed in my own room.

To be honest, I'm starting to get tired of Morphine.

I thought it'd more aggressive, but it's not.

Everything they do are normal, it's not like they need me anyway.

I hate how I'm doing nothing, merely rotting in the tower.

Aoba

...ah-ah.

I wake from the bed, walking out of the door, hoping to work out my restless body.

It's not like I have anywhere I want to go. I'm tired of just sitting around, and I only thought of moving around.

With both my hands in the parka's pockets, I walk casually along the corridor, then, I hear footsteps from behind me.

Virus

Aoba-san.

I look over my shoulder. Virus and Trip stand behind me.

Trip

We found Aoba.

Virus

So you're here.

Aoba

Something wrong with me being here?

Virus

Not at all, it's because we're looking for Aoba-san.

Aoba

Looking for me? What's your business?

Without hiding my expression – one that spells strongly of frustration they're to tell me anything boring – Virus and Trip look at me with a sort of disbelief on their faces.

Virus

Huh? You don't look very good. Did something happen?

Aoba

Nothing at all.

Trip

Haha. Aoba, are you unsatisfied? There's not enough aggression, right?

Aoba

...Something like that. In the end, Morphine is not that great, after all. I can't go out of control nor I can destroy anything, it's no fun.

Virus

...That's good then.

For some reason, a smile broke on both of their faces.

Aoba

Huh? What do you mean that it's good?

Virus

We mentioned that we're looking for Aoba-san, right? Actually we have something that would suit Aoba-san perfectly well now.

Trip

Aoba. .... Do you want to play Rhyme?

Aoba

...Rhyme?

Virus

Yeah. We're certain that the Aoba-san from before was definitely interested in Rhyme. But what about the Aoba-san now?

Aoba

... Even so, this is sudden.

Virus

If you're wondering why we're asking you of this, we have two reasons to it. One of it is in regards to Morphine's future direction.

Aoba

Direction?

Virus

Yes. Now, "Spirited Away" is heavily reliant on Rib's movement, but we can't be targeting Rib teams all the time.

Virus

If we're to focus too much on one point, the residents on the island would become more and more alert, and above all, "Spirited Away" would also lose its mysteriousness.

Trip

As we thought... what's that again? Street Legend?

Virus

City Legend.

Trip

Yeah, that's it. We thought it's best to maintain the reputation of City Legend.

Virus

If it becomes something that goes out of control, it'd be pretty hard to manage.

Virus

That said, in order to drop the frequency of "Spirited Away", we thought of shifting our focus to gathering data from young Rhyme players.

Virus

Because it's in regards to data gathering, we thought perhaps we could ask Aoba-san to participate in this project as well.

Virus

Aoba-san might be aware of this already but we'll also be gathering your voice data. That's the second reason.

Aoba

...

It's true that Toue had mentioned in their phone call that he'd be gathering my voice data.

Oh well, they can do whatever they like.

That aside... participating in Rhyme, huh.

The "Aoba" from before had no interests in any commotion that has to do with Rhyme.

And it's all because Rhyme is "the reason why he had a scattered past", it'd become some sort of regret later.

But, to me now...

It's exactly what I want.

Aoba

... That means I can do whatever I like in Rhyme, right?

Virus

We don't mind if you're to destroy one or two people. We will handle the rest after.

... But, under one condition.

Trip

We need to be around when Aoba participates in Rhyme. That's why, when you want play, let us know, okay?

Aoba

In other words, without your permission, I wouldn't be able to play Rhyme?

Virus

We will be checking real-time on Aoba-san's data.

Virus

Also, in any case if anything is to happen, we'll always be around to handle it.

With that said, Virus lifts a trifling smile.

I'm not particularly fine having both of them to monitor me but...

This is indeed far better than the Morphine activities I've been participating in.

Aoba

... Okay then. I'm fine with that, let me play Rhyme.

Virus

Sure.

Trip

We did it.

Rhyme.

When I think about it, it's been quite some time ago, huh.

I did it once when "Reason" was dragged into a Drive-By, when he lost consciousness.

When I think about how I'm able to do whatever I like again, I'm overwhelmed by excitement.

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When I said that I'd like to participate in one immediately, Virus and Trip brought into a specific place in the tower.

It's located at the highest floor of the tower... A room on a floor that they called it as the research floor.

There are two operation tables in the room, along the wall are various sorts of machines.

A researcher, dressed in white, stands by one side, expressionless.

Virus

Aoba-san, please lie down on the operation table. We will be making preparations to collect your data.

I did as what I was told, climbing onto the operation table, and soon enough, the researcher moves like he's a robot, then entering some sort of unknown code into my body.

Aoba

By the way, what about AllMate?

I've off the power of Ren, leaving him in the room.

Trip

It's okay. We've prepared it for you here.

Trip points with his chin, gesturing at something black lying by the side of where the researcher is working.

It's a dog-type AllMate. It looks a bit like Ren, his fur just a tad darker.

Virus

We feel that the compatibility of it might not be as good as the one that Aoba-san has been having for a long time but please feel free to use him however you like.

Trip

Aoba, do you possess some sort of rejection towards things like... if it's not your own AllMate, then you wouldn't want to use him?

Aoba

Not at all.

Anyway, if I am to wake Ren up and bring him into Rhyme, he'd only be a nuisance, interfering with the game.

I shake my head, then, the researcher activates the black dog-type AllMate.

Virus

We didn't name him so he's labelled as NO NAME on the setting page.

Virus

There's setting for his online avatar but he doesn't have any setting for any human personality so every one of his action would resonate with one of a robot's.

Aoba

It's better that way.

It'd be troublesome if he keeps trying to have small talks with me.

Virus

Well then, I think it's time for us to start on Rhyme.

Virus

We would not be using the hunting way like how we did in the Old Resident District but we will be using the online searching mode to hunt for the opponent.

Virus

As for your Rhyme name, we will be using the one we have set into the system. Aoba-san's Rhyme name is too well-known after all. Would you mind?

Aoba

Fine.

Virus

Well then... Have a safe trip, Aoba-san.

With Virus' voice, a form of pressure started gripping in my head.

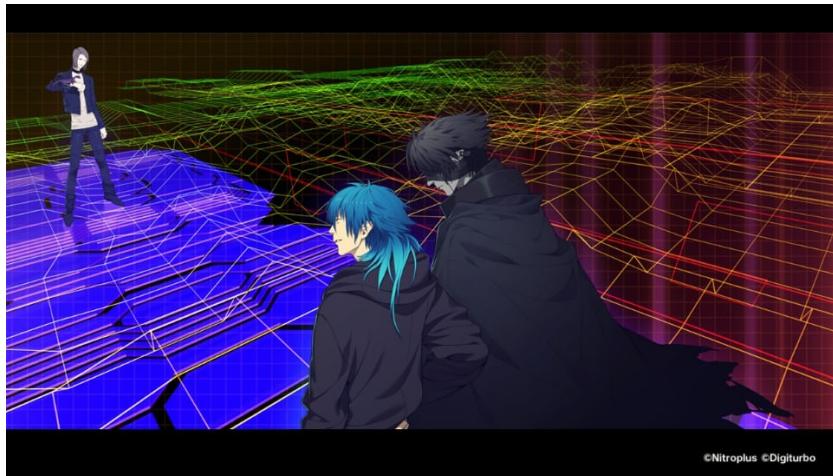
I close my eyes at the darkened vision, and then, I feel as if my body has been lifted up.

When I finally open my eyes, all that I can see is a public field.

Aoba

I'll count on you, partner.

Thanks to the nostalgia feeling of being back on a Rhyme field, I try talking to him but there's no response from him. Well, he doesn't have any personality after all. This should be expected.



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Aoba  
...Looks so weak-

I laugh through my nose, muttering.

Oh well, whoever the opponent is I have no intention to lose anyway.

Aoba  
I'm sorry if I accidentally crush you too fast, alright?

As I say that, a small smile curves from the corners of my lips.

As I watch the opponent going into attack stance, I start to give instructions to the AllMate.

Aoba  
Defense, set.



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Aoba  
Tch.

He's only defending but no countering, huh?

It's to be expected but he indeed feels way too different from Ren.

Aoba  
Jubilation, set.



...Even though it'd come to an end eventually, it's not the end I'm greatly satisfied with.

Of course, I won at the end.

I've become a bit slow thanks to not being playing for a long time and the AllMate has missed several times but I won at the end.

But what makes me mad is that when I was about to destroy the opponent, Virus stopped me.

From the outside, he stopped the game for it being "the Game Master's decision". I was forcefully logged out.

When I returned to reality, I gritted my teeth at Virus' direction. But, Virus said, with a casual face.

Virus

If you destroy him from the first time it'll become another mystery, Aoba-san. If you want to play longer, perhaps you may want to consider keeping yourself in check as well?

Without being able to conform to what they said, I walked out of the room, my attitude remains bad towards both Virus and Trip.

They weren't at all affected by my bad mood, instead, they praised on my battling skill. And that's exactly what's making me even madder.

Without the intention to fix the relationship between us, I returned to the room, then lied on the bed, staring at the ceiling.

Ever since I finished Rhyme, my migraine has been continuously bugging me. It's not an unbearable extent but it's pretty bad.

Aoba

...

I release a sigh, then reminding myself of what happened in Rhyme today.

I have a huge amount of dissatisfaction left within me.

...but.

I could play more aggressively than when I went for "Spirited Away".

I'm unsatisfied of how I was stopped from using my power but the sense of excitement is still something that's undeniably existing within me from the experience.

Aoba

...As expected, Rhyme is more suitable for me, huh.

As I mutter that, I close my eyes, hoping the relentless headache would leave me alone.

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(DRAMAtical Murder re:code [DRAMAtical Murder re:code] 2016)